

February 28, 2023

Representative Ginny Klevorn
Chair, State and Local Government Finance and Policy
Minnesota House of Representatives
St. Paul, MN

Dear Chair Klevorn,

As the President and CEO of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, I write to express our support of the bills to advance equality for women, girls, gender-expansive and all people across Minnesota, HF197 and HF193. The Equal Rights Amendment bill would provide for a vote by Minnesotans to amend our constitution with an amendment prohibiting the infringement of rights based on "race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, ancestry or national origin." We also support the resolution calling for the recognition of ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the United State Constitution.

For 40 years, the Women's Foundation has invested more than \$45 million in communities across the state, and advanced policy to create a state where women, girls, and their families thrive. Our commitment to systems-level change centering communities extends from our historic investments in MN Girls Are Not For Sale to the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota, and continues today with investments in research and policy change.

With the Center on Women, Gender, & Public Policy at the Humphrey School, we produce the state's leading research on the well-being of women and girls every two years.

Our research shows that even after accounting for education, field of study, industry in which they work, and experience, Minnesota women five years out of school are still paid 5% less than men.

- The gender wage gap in Minnesota is persistent; it hasn't narrowed over the past five years.
- On average, Minnesota women who work full time all year make \$0.79 for every dollar that men make, with further disparities among women depending on race or ethnicity.
- On average, women in Minnesota lose an estimated \$447,960 in lifetime earnings due to the gender wage gap.
- When we disaggregate Minnesota's wage gap by race and ethnicity, the income disparities are striking. For example, the wage gap is more than two and half times as large for Somali women, and twice as large for other African immigrant and Hmong women than it is for white women in Minnesota.

The ERA bill and resolution before you are needed to provide additional legal foundations to ensure equality for all – particularly for women, girls, and gender-expansive people who have faced gender-based violence, discrimination in employment, and unequal access to health care. We urge you to act to create on HF3599 and HF3661 to make Minnesota a place where women, girls, and gender-expansive people from all zip codes and backgrounds can thrive.

Thank you,



Gloria Perez
CEO & President
Women's Foundation of Minnesota